



United States Department of Agriculture

RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS
AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE
www.ars.usda.gov

"Solving Problems for the Growing World"

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Announcement Number: ARS-X4E-0351
Demo/Alternative Merit
Promotion

Position Title/Series/Grade:
Botanist
GS-0430-09/11

Promotion Potential: GS-11

Employment Type: Full-time - Permanent

Grade and Salary Range:
GS-09 \$41,815.00 - \$54,360.00 Per Year
GS-11 \$50,593.00 - \$65,769.00 Per Year

Location of Position:
U.S. National Arboretum, Floral & Nursery Plants
Research Unit, Washington, D.C.

Who Can Apply:
All U.S. Citizens

Opening Date: August 23, 2004

Closing Date: September 20, 2004

For copies of vacancy announcements and/or application materials, please call (301) 504-1482. For additional information regarding employment opportunities, please visit <http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/jobs/apply.htm>.

Contact Information

Human Resources Specialist:
Liz Parker
(301) 504-1351

DC Relay Service: (202) 855-1234 (TDD)

Send Applications to:
USDA, Agricultural Research Service
Human Resources Division
Attn: Liz Parker
5601 Sunnyside Avenue, Stop 5104
Beltsville, MD 20705-5104
Fax: (301) 504-1535
E-mail: scirecruit@ars.usda.gov

Applications must be postmarked, e-mailed or faxed by the closing date of the announcement. Applications received in Government envelopes will not be considered.

Please take advantage of the Application Package Checklist at the end of this announcement to ensure your application is complete.

For information about the organization and location, visit the location's website at www.usna.usda.gov.

Applications will also be accepted from USDA Surplus and Federal Displaced Employees in the commuting area.

Major Duties:

The mission of the U.S. National Arboretum is to provide leadership to the research community, the horticultural industry, and the public garden community in the introduction, preservation, and enhancement of woody landscape plants.

This is a support scientist position in which you will serve as the manager of the U.S. National Arboretum's herbarium collection and provide taxonomic support to a plant systematics research program, the Arboretum, in general, and its stakeholders. The herbarium is an essential resource that documents past and current research and breeding work in many groups of plants, provides material for current and future taxonomic research, and provides information for planning future breeding and germplasm collecting.

Primary responsibilities include managing the herbarium collection, including the electronic database; leading or participating in collecting trips to collect both wild and cultivated plants; and performing curatorial responsibilities, such as collection development and management, publication of the collection through documentation and databases, and providing public service, such as collaborating with others in the scientific and public communities on various projects, answering taxonomic questions, and vouchering wild and cultivated plants worldwide.

Working Conditions and Other Considerations:

A valid driver's license is required in order to travel between the main campus of the Arboretum in Washington, D.C., Beltsville, Maryland, and field localities.

You may provide technical and administrative supervision for temporary employees, contract workers, interns, and/or volunteers.

Periodic plant collection trips will require travel to other botanical gardens and arboreta, and to field locations in the United States and abroad. Plant collection trips include travel to remote areas of foreign countries where access to comfortable facilities is non-existent and English may not be spoken. These trips are often arduous and prolonged, involving physical exertion, such as long hikes into and out of remote areas, long hours, and physical isolation. Field work is conducted throughout the year, and you may be exposed to temperatures up to 100 degrees Fahrenheit and sun, wind, rain, dust, pollen, noise.

Qualifications Required: Your education and experience will be evaluated against all qualification requirements (basic and any additional requirements) listed below.

Basic Requirements

A degree in botany or basic plant science that included at least 24 semester hours in botany; OR a combination of education and experience that included courses equivalent to a major in botany or in basic plant science that included at least 24 semester hours in botany, plus appropriate experience or additional education. Courses in basic botany, plant anatomy or morphology, cytology, histology, genetics, taxonomy or systematics, algology, mycology, ethnobotany, and those dealing with specific problems of a botanical nature or with specific groups of plants are considered acceptable.

This position has a positive education requirement. You must provide a copy of your academic transcripts OR a list of college courses with credit hours, dates completed, and grades received to verify education when applying for this position. If this information is not provided, your education may not be appropriately evaluated, and you may lose consideration for this position. If you are selected for this position, you will have to provide an official copy of your transcripts prior to entering on duty.

Additional Requirements:

You must demonstrate at least one year of specialized experience, i.e., experience that has equipped you with the particular knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) required to perform successfully the duties of the position and which is typically in or related to the work of the position to be filled.

For the GS-9 level of this position, your specialized experience must have been equivalent to at least the GS-7 level in the federal service. Alternatively, 2 years of progressively higher level graduate education leading to a master's degree or master's or equivalent graduate degree will qualify you for this level. Appropriate combinations of education and experience may also be qualifying for this level.

For the GS-11 level, your specialized experience must have been equivalent to at least the GS-9 level in the federal service. Alternatively, 3 years of progressively higher level graduate education leading to a Ph.D. degree or Ph.D. or equivalent doctoral degree will qualify you for this level. Appropriate combinations of education and experience may also be qualifying for this level.

Time-In-Grade Restrictions apply for all candidates considered under Merit Promotion/Alternative Merit Promotion.

Specialized Experience - experience which has equipped you with the following Knowledge, Skills and Abilities - 'KSAs' required to perform the duties of this position:

1. Knowledge of the basic theories and practices of organismal botany, especially of plant taxonomy, nomenclature, and morphology, to manage the herbarium and to support a plant systematics research program.
2. Ability to perform the curatorial functions to manage the herbarium, including such activities as collections management, specimen preservation and conservation, database management, public service activities, and exhibit preparation.
3. Skill using a relational database to search for botanical data.
4. Ability to identify wild and cultivated plants.
5. Ability to conduct field work under a variety of conditions, including remote and undeveloped areas of wild vegetation.

Other Important Information**Benefits Package:**

A Benefits Package is authorized for this position. Additional information about Federal benefits can be obtained at www.usajobs.opm.gov/ei61.htm.

Veteran's Preference:

For further details, call the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) at 478-757-3000 or TDD 478-744-2299. Select General Information on the Federal Employment Policies and Procedures, and then Veterans Preference and Special Appointing Authorities for Veterans. Or visit their VetGuide website at www.opm.gov/employ/veterans/html/vetguide.asp.

Relocation Expenses:

Payment of relocation expenses will be determined in accordance with P&P 412.5, Recruitment and Retention Incentives and Other Special Pay, Sections 6 and 7, as amended by Bulletin 03-402, which may be found at: http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/staffing_recruit/reloweb.htm.

Financial Disclosure Requirement:

Federal employees are subject to prohibitions against officially dealing with outside organizations in which they have a financial interest. You may be required to submit a financial disclosure report if hired for this position.

False statements:

If you make a false statement in any part of your application, you may not be hired; may be fired after beginning work; or may be fined or jailed.

Optional Form 306, (Declaration for Federal Employment):

If you are selected for this position, you will be required to complete this form before an offer may be made.

USDA Surplus/Federal Displaced Employees:

USDA Surplus/Federal displaced employees must submit documentary evidence of eligibility. Well qualified surplus and displaced employees within the local commuting area will receive selection priority as provided by OPM regulations. Well-qualified means the applicant meets the basic qualification and eligibility requirements and all selective placement factors; is rated above minimally qualified against the KSAs or quality criteria; and is able to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position upon entry. Applicants must submit the following:

- 1) a copy of your RIF Separation Notice or Certification of Expected Separation or other documentation indicating that you are a surplus employee;
- 2) evidence of full performance level of current position;
- 3) a copy of your most recent performance appraisal; and
- 4) a copy of your most recent SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action, to verify reassignment eligibility.

Selective Service System:

Males over age 18 who were born after December 31, 1959, must have registered with the Selective Service System (or have an exemption) to be eligible for Federal employment.

Reasonable Accommodation:

Reasonable accommodation is provided to applicants with disabilities. If you need a reasonable accommodation for any part of the application and hiring process, or have questions regarding reasonable accommodation and/or accessibility for any part of the application and hiring process, please contact the Disability Program Manager on 202-720-6161 or through the DC Relay Service on 202-855-1234 (TDD). The decision to grant reasonable accommodation is made on a case-by-case basis.

Civil Rights Policy Statement:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is an equal opportunity employer and provider. Discrimination is prohibited in all USDA programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's Target Center on 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice and TDD).

Application Package Checklist

If application packages do not contain all of the requested information, you may lose consideration for the job. To help you ensure your application fully outlines your qualifications and eligibility for this position, please submit the following documentation.

- ☐ Optional Form 612 (Optional Application for Federal Employment), SF-171 (Application for Federal Employment), Resume, Curriculum Vitae, or other document outlining your qualifications (Go to <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.asp> and scroll down to obtain the OF-612).

The following information is required of all applicants:

- ☐ Announcement number, title, and grade(s) of the position
- ☐ Full name, mailing address (including zip code) and day and evening phone numbers (with area code)
- ☐ Social security number
- ☐ Statement that you are a U.S. citizen (if not using the OF-612 or SF-171)
- ☐ Copy of DD Form 214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) (if claiming veterans preference) (Visit the following web site for additional information:
<http://www.opm.gov/veterans/html/vetguide.asp>)
- ☐ SF-15 (Application for 10-point Veteran's Preference) plus the support documentation required by this form (if claiming 10-point veterans preference) (Go to the web site at <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/sf.asp> to obtain form.)
- ☐ Paid and non-paid work experience related to the position. For each period of work experience include:
 - ___ Job title
 - ___ Series/grade (if Federal employment)
 - ___ Duties and accomplishments
 - ___ Employer's name and address
 - ___ Supervisor's name and contact information
 - ___ Starting and ending dates of employment (at least month & year)
 - ___ Number of hours worked per week
 - ___ Salary
 - ___ Indicate if we may contact current supervisor/employer
- ☐ Other job related information, such as training courses (title & year); skills (e.g., other languages, computer software/hardware, tools, etc.)
 - ___ Certificates/licenses (current)
 - ___ Honors, awards, and special accomplishments
 - ___ Supplemental questionnaire if applicable (usually for Federal Wage System positions - WG, WL, WS)
- ☐ Copy of college transcripts (if qualifying all or in part on the basis of education for this position) (If you have non-conventional education, e.g., foreign study, continuing education units, life experience, etc., go to the web site at <http://www.opm.gov/qualifications/SEC-II/s2-e4.htm#e4a> and look under the heading

“Other Education” for information governing acceptability of this type of education.)

- ☐ Copy of SF-50 (Notification of Personnel Action) to verify possession of competitive civil service status (if you are a current or previous federal employee)
- ☐ Copy of most recent performance appraisal (if you are a current federal employee)
- ☐ Second copy of application package (if the position is open to candidates outside the federal government AND if you are a current federal employee or a candidate with reinstatement eligibility and wish to be considered under both merit promotion and competitive examining procedures).
- ☐ Support documentation for eligibility for special hiring authorities, such as disability, Peace Corps service, etc. (If you have questions about whether you are eligible for a particular hiring authority, please call the servicing HR specialist or visit the web site at <http://www.usajobs.opm.gov/a2.htm> and scroll down to the subject heading, “Category”.)
- ☐ Support documentation if you are a USDA surplus or federal displaced employee (See pertinent section under “Other Important Information” below.)
- ☐ Self-certification of typing speed (if required as a basic qualification for the position)
- ☐ While not required, a separate response to the required knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs listed under Specialized Experience) and Selective Placement Factor(s), if present, for this position may better highlight your specific qualifications for this position. (For an explanation of KSAs, go to the web site at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/careers/whatksa.html>).

If this is your first time applying for a federal job, or if you wish to view more detailed information about various aspects of applying for federal jobs, go to <http://www.opm.gov/forms/html/of.asp> and scroll down to access the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Optional Form 510.